

Prishtina, 20/04/2024

**THE SOUTH EAST EUROPEAN COOPERATION PROCESS PARLIAMENTARY
ASSEMBLY (SEECF PA)**

GENERAL COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND SCIENCE

Rapporteur: Vlora Dumoshi, Chair

“EDUCATION FOR A DIFFERENT WORLD “

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Introduction

The inventions and technological developments have changed society in many segments, particularly altering the approach of various parties towards education. In this direction, the investments of different parties have been focused on education and adapting the way students are educated, to suit a world that is continuously changing and transforming. Recent investments in education are aimed at adapting the educational system to enable students, upon leaving school benches, to be competent for the labor market and for international cooperation.

This summary will present individual reports of South-East European parties on how their educational systems are adapting to the demands of a rapidly developing world. Relevant skills for employment and international cooperation are priorities for SEECP parties.

This paper analyzes in a summarized way the main developments of education in the South-East European region, focusing on the adaptation of educational systems to prepare students for a changing world, with a focus on aligning students' skills with the demands of the labor market and international cooperation. In this process, the following will be identified: a) Continuous change and education; b) The impact of technology on education; and c) Global employment market.

In this context, individual participant reports are important for assessing key developments in the field of education. These reports provide greater opportunities to assess achievements and identify challenges in the efforts of parties to adapt their education systems to the demands of a changing world.

1. Continuous change and education

Education has become a real challenge at a time when significant changes in values, technology, industry, and economy are continuous. From this point of view, the only thing that has not changed is the continuous change in these spheres, which also implies a different approach to the education of today's generations and, with it, educational policies. In a publication by the U.S. Department of Education and the Institute of

Education Sciences¹, the need for continuous changes or continuous improvements in various cycles is highlighted, thus testing new approaches, tools and strategies to address current problems in the education system.

In this context, the study explains that there are three main issues which can also be posed in the form of questions, so that the cycle of continuous improvement is effective: What problem are we trying to solve? What change might we introduce and why? And, how will we know that a change is an improvement? While according to this study, in order for the cycle of continuous change to be considered closed, must have at least four steps developed: planning, implementation, the study of data from the change, and action based on the generated data.

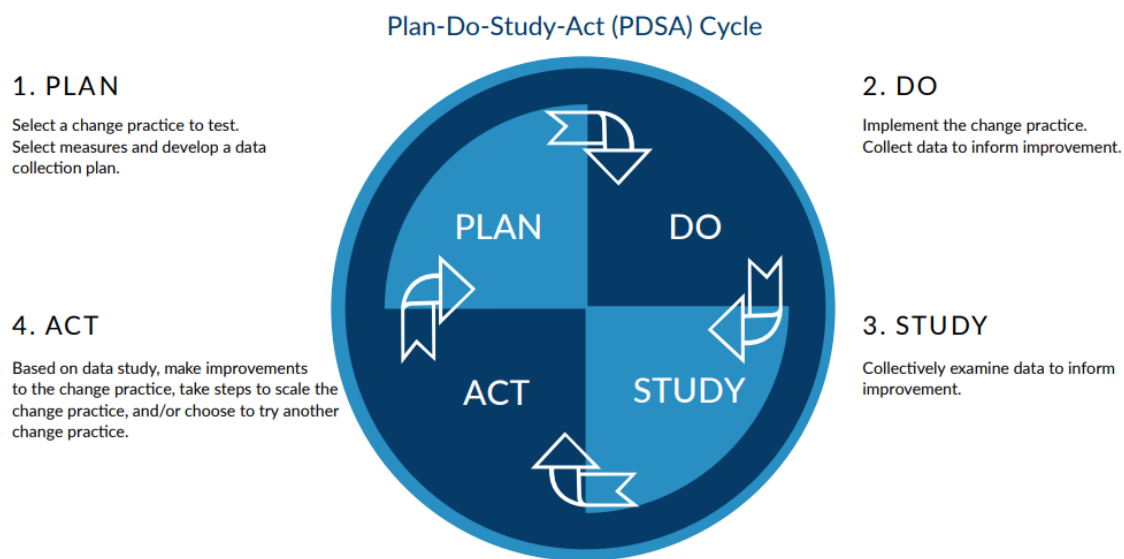


Figure 1: The cycle of continuous improvement according to the Institute of Education Sciences.

In this line of thought, the Education Development Center, in its publications, also addresses continuous development in the field of education as one of the best opportunities to adapt the education system to societal changes. However, the guidebook of this center emphasizes staff development within the education system, considering it as the main key to success. Furthermore, this guidebook emphasizes that continuous change should focus on improving technical knowledge and skills, which, along with the

¹ Karen Shakman, Diana Wogan, Sheila Rodriguez, Jared Boyce, and Debra Shaver. *Continuous Improvement in Education: A Toolkit for Schools and Districts*, Institute of Education Science, October 2020, USA - https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northeast/pdf/REL_2021014.pdf

adaptive qualities of continuous improvement, closely relate to developing individual and collective habits of mind and practice².

The issue of continuous improvement has always been treated as one of the main approaches to the development of social change systems, particularly educational ones. In this sense, since 1973, in a study by Huberman, published by UNESCO, it is observed that education systems are much more resistant to change than other systems. In this focus, the study emphasizes that resistance to change is mainly related to individual and institutional factors that have difficulty adapting to changes³.

To see where SCEE parties stand in implementing changes in education in a situation where all other societal actors are experiencing rapid change, this study aims to find public data that address elements of continuous change, since studies dealing with this specific issue are not available for these parties. One of the elements of change that affect continuous improvement is the enhancement of basic documents with which the educational system is developed. From this point of view, the latest data from OECD for the parties of the South East Europe show that the implementation of competency-based curricula remains fully unimplemented, due to the lack of support provided to teachers in meeting their needs for its implementation⁴. In this OECD publication, several key issues related to the improvement of education systems in these parties are also listed. According to these findings, the teacher quality, infrastructure including digitalization and educational technology, as well as the quality and relevance of vocational education and training, are three of the key issues that require improvement in the education system. As for the teacher quality, according to this study, it depends on attracting into the teaching profession individuals of high ability, and effectively preparing, motivating and developing those individuals throughout their teaching career. In this context, the study emphasizes that the parties of the region, despite raising the standards for teachers, in various periods and not on a regular basis, their implementation remains a major challenge.

² Building a Culture of Continuous Improvement - Guidebook and toolkit, Education Development Center, 2019 - <https://www.edc.org/sites/default/files/uploads/EDC-Building-Culture-Continuous-Improvement.pdf>

³ A.M. Huberman, Understanding change in education: an introduction, Experiments and innovations in education No. 4, UNESCO, 1973 - <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000003397>

⁴ Boosting education and competencies in the Western Balkans, OECD - <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/f07dab91-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/f07dab91-en#section-d1e8827>

Table 2.3. Teacher standards in the Western Balkans have been developed, but their use varies		
	Year teacher standards were introduced	Level and consistency of implementation
Albania	2013, revised in 2016	Consistent / moderate implementation
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2016-17	Inconsistent / low implementation
Kosovo	2004, revised in 2017	Consistent / moderate implementation
Montenegro	2016	Consistent / moderate implementation
North Macedonia	Developed in 2016	Consistent / low implementation
Serbia	2011	Consistent / moderate implementation

Figure 2: The OECD data on the minimum standards required for teachers, their consistency and implementation.

Findings from this study for parties in the region highlight that the main challenges of attracting individuals with teaching skills are related to the hiring of teachers on merit-base, making the best education students enter the teaching process. Then, compensation and the possibility of career advancement are seen as one of the key factors in improving teacher performance.

Furthermore, the main findings regarding teachers are related to strengthening the level of consistency in the implementation of teaching standards throughout the region, accrediting education programs based on the necessary teaching competencies linked to developed teaching standards, and the obligation of practical training for teachers.

However, OECD findings for parties in the region, in addition to challenges related to teachers, mention several other key factors that influence the improvement of the education system overall. First of all, it is mentioned the setting of clear standards for what is expected from students of different levels, teachers, and the educational system overall. The setting of these standards, according to OECD, would affect the achievement of a high level of quality. Further, the collection of data on the current learning and education performance, thus highlighting the possibility for policy makers to take appropriate decisions for improvement. And, then achieving a coherence in the school evaluation and assessment system that effectively support student learning and in turn, an assessment for teachers in relation to knowledge and skills that promote education goals.

2. The impact of technology on education

The development of technology has affected education in several areas, starting with teaching, learning, management and communication of educational institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst for the increased use of technology in the education system. Therefore, based on this premise, the report aims to provide data on the forms and manner of impact that technology has on education.

In a study published in 2023 by UNESCO, it is noted that digital technology has changed but not transformed education. Supporting this finding, the report points out that despite the changes that have occurred in many parties around the world in recent years, education systems remained relatively untouched and computers and internet devices are not used in classrooms on a large scale⁵. According to the findings of this report, the greatest technological transformation in the education system has occurred in adult education, specifically in universities, which represent a sub-sector of a much larger system. However, the report notes that technology has made a wide range of informal learning opportunities accessible. Nevertheless, there has never been a greater use of technology than during the time of the pandemic, but there is still no accurate data on whether this use of technology has been used for positive aspects and improvement of education or whether it has been used more for entertainment and leisure than for education.

As for quality, according to the report, digital technology encourages engagement and facilitates collaboration and connections, but an individualized approach to education reduces learners' opportunities to learn in real-life settings and has a negative impact on well-being and privacy. In this segment, Artificial Intelligence is said to have been applied in education for the past 40 years, however, according to the report, more evidence is needed to understand whether its tools can change how students learn. The report highlights that the necessary skills of students in terms of digitalization (technology) are related to several main areas: information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, safety, and problem-solving. One of the conclusions that the report offers is related to teachers and technological changes, highlighting the need for teachers to adapt their pedagogy, use multiple resources related to the curriculum and assessment, and interact more frequently with students and parents.

However, where do the parties of the region stand in the use of technology in schools? First of all, regarding the infrastructural aspect, public data from OECD show that the parties of the South East Europe

⁵ Global education monitoring report, 2023: technology in education: a tool on whose terms? - <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000385723>

are far behind the percentage of equipping schools with computers. According to the OECD report⁶, on average only 0.25 computers per student are accessible in the schools of these parties, compared to 0.8 of the member parties of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Figure 2.10. **There is a need to increase the use of digital technology in schools**

Computer:student ratio, 2018 (Panel A), and percentage of computers connected to the internet, 2018 (Panel B)

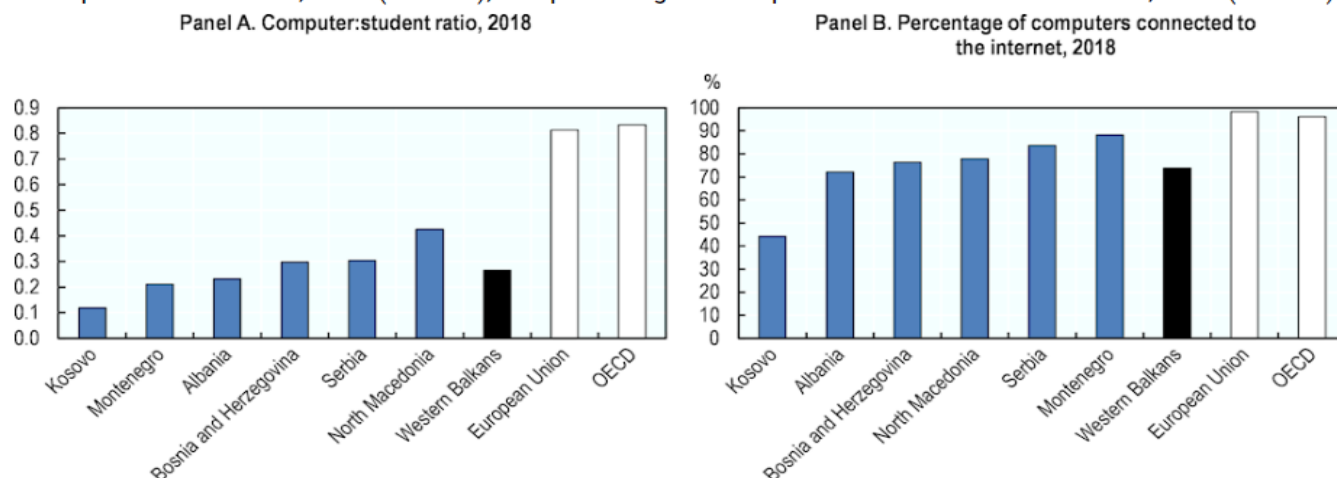


Figure 3: Percentage of computers and their access to the Internet in South East European parties, compared to OECD and European Union parties.

Beyond this fact, the preparation of teachers for the use of technology in schools in these parties turns out to be one of the main challenges. In the OECD analysis, South East European parties are instructed to develop capacities for the use of technology among teachers through training on its use in the teaching process and also, the increase of students' competencies in this field during the classroom learning process.

3. Global employment market

The employment market has undergone a major change due to ongoing technological influences, thus making some professions globally in demand. In this regard, the continuous change being applied in industries that provide employment opportunities has received another push. According to the World Economic Forum which has published a report, "The Future of Jobs Report 2023"⁷, the skills needed for work will change by 45 percent in the last five years. The findings of this report say that the adoption of new technologies in the industry has led 86% of companies to promote digital transformation, which according

⁶ Multi-dimensional Review of the Western Balkans: From Analysis to Action - <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/f07dab91-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/f07dab91-en>

⁷ The Future of Jobs Report 2023 - <https://www.weforum.org/publications/the-future-of-jobs-report-2023/in-full/4-skills-outlook/#4-skills-outlook>

to the report will directly affect the promotion of an "evolution" of the skills required for jobs in all views, including; the spectrum of skills, knowledge, abilities and attitudes, including the adaptation of workers to automated processes and so-called Artificial Intelligence. According to the report, the core skills that will be required by the labor market over the next five years are related to: analytical thinking, creative thinking, flexibility and agility, motivation, etc. The required skills can be grouped into several areas which include; cognitive skills, engagement skills, ethics and physical abilities, management skills, technology skills ethics, management, physical fitness, technological skills, and working with others.

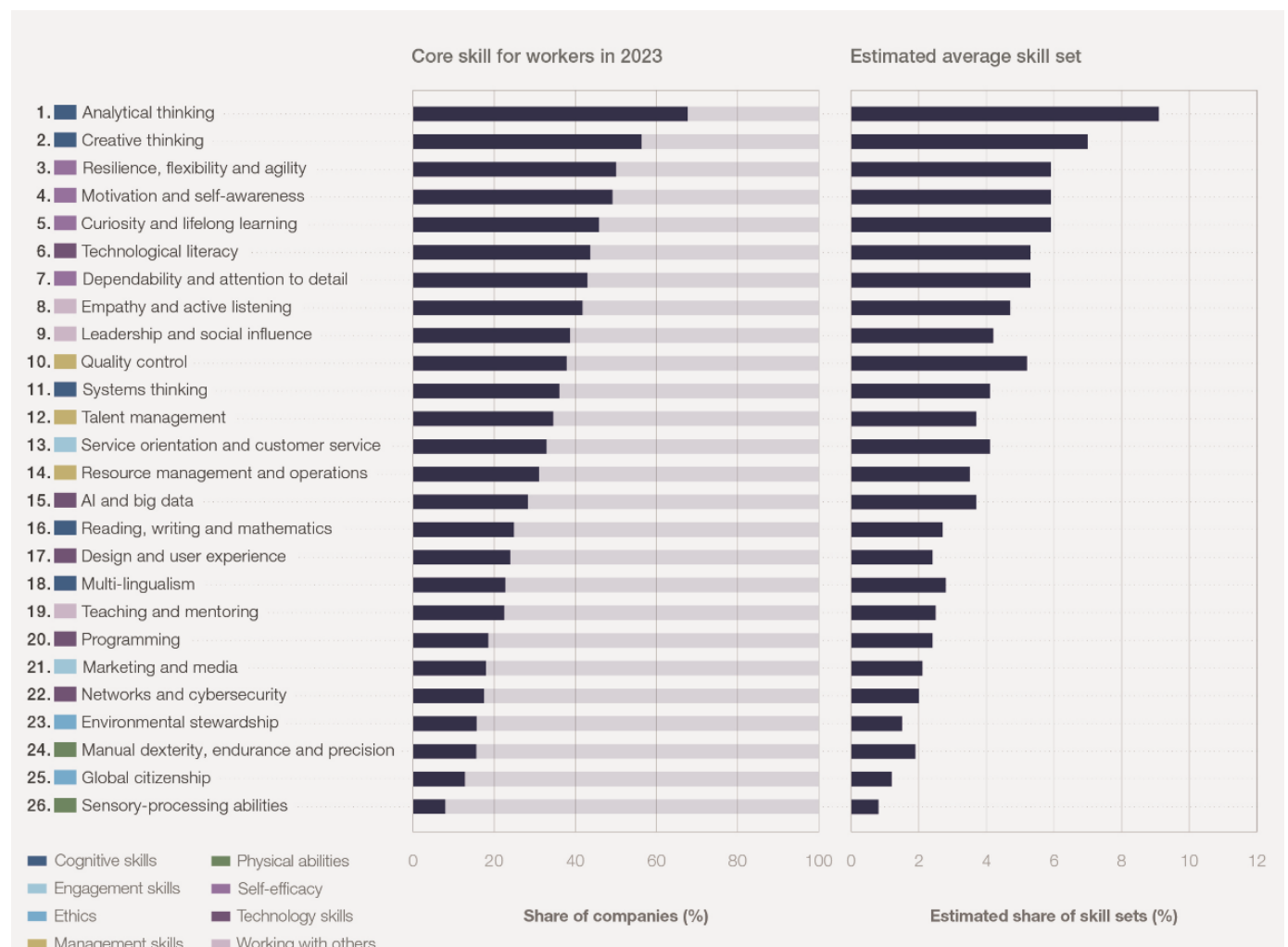


Figure 4: Core skills required by the labor market according to the World Economic Forum.

On the other hand, in a report published by the European Training Foundation last year, for the South East European parties, it is emphasized that new forms of employment, including work through online platforms, are increasing globally, and the South East Europe is no exception. According to the findings of the report,

digitization is creating new job opportunities without requiring formal skills, but practical ones, and offering flexibility in terms of locations and working hours. According to the findings of this report, this way of remote work could potentially reduce incentives for economic migration, consequently affecting the adaptation of students to the international labor market. Regarding the skills acquired through education and demanded by the labor market, the ETF report highlights three areas where parties in the region can work more: stimulating lifelong learning through flexible learning pathways; developing key competencies along with professional skills in formal education and training; as well as providing comprehensive non-formal continuous training: digital skills, languages, communication, learning to learn, and entrepreneurial skills. Also, career management support and the provision of counseling, including special attention to gender aspects, are seen as opportunities for skill development. An example for different education is Ankara, which has decided that the 2024 budget of the Ministry of National Education constitutes 14.6% of the Central General Budget, amounting to \$38.2 billion. Since 2002, this figure has increased by 780%.⁸ This participant has achieved success in employing students through the Vocational and Technical Education sector.

⁸ https://sgb.meb.gov.tr/meb_iys_dosyalar/2023_12/17102959_meb_2024yilibutcesunuskonusmasi.pdf

Conclusions

Undoubtedly, changing and improving education requires different approaches for today's generations of students, based on new values, technology and modern industry. This improvement should include planning, implementing data and changing actions based on the scientific data from the reports of the SEEC parties.

In this regard, technological development has influenced changes in teaching methods, learning methods, and communication management in educational institutions. The use of technology in the classroom, including internet access and computer usage, is important and should be used effectively.

Furthermore, technology has had the greatest impact in the labor market, where students need the necessary skills for work and adaptation to new technologies and industries, especially in professions demanded during the time when artificial intelligence has also come into use.

To achieve these objectives, SEEC parties must adapt to the requirements of a changing world in all aspects, especially in educational systems, by meeting the demands for lifelong learning, developing key competencies, providing comprehensive non-formal continuous training, and supporting career management and counseling services.

Another conclusion of this report is that teachers play a very important role in the use of technology in schools, to further improve the education system and adapt the labor market with the skills acquired in the classrooms. Investments by SCEEP members are needed in teachers' skills, to make teaching more attractive, motivate them further, and empower and implement teaching standards.

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